

Uniforms of the  
*Napoleonic Wars*  
in Colour  
1796~1814



Devised and Illustrated  
by  
Jack Cassin-Scott



## INTRODUCTION TO THE COLOUR PLATES

The study of military costume is a most inexact science. There are three basic sources from which information on military uniforms may be obtained: firstly, actual items of uniform and equipment still in existence; these are, at this distance in time, very scarce. Secondly, there are 'dress regulations'; and thirdly, pictures by contemporary artists. These three sources, however, more often than not present conflicting evidence. Dress regulations, where they existed at all, were frequently and flagrantly disregarded; officers often incorporated features of their own design into regulation uniform, and it was not uncommon for whole regiments to wear items of uniform not officially recognised. This applies equally to pieces of uniform still in existence; a coat, for example, may include a feature unique to the officer to whom it belonged. To complicate matters further, some contemporary artists were less accurate than others, and the uniforms they sketched might contain features adopted on campaign.

When on campaign, uniforms quickly changed their appearance when non-regulation items of uniform were adopted of necessity. To give an example of how a regiment's uniforms might incorporate unusual features, take the extreme case of the British 95th Rifles in Spain in 1812; Lieutenant George Simmons described them as 'a moving rag-fair'. John Kincaid, another officer of the 95th, described his regiment: 'there was scarcely a vestige of uniform among the men, some of whom were dressed in Frenchmen's coats, some in white breeches and huge jack-boots, some with cocked hats and queues; most of their swords were fixed on the rifles, and stuck full of hams, tongues, and loaves of bread, and not a few were carrying bird-cages! There never was a better masked corps!' Rifleman Edward Costello also described them 'dressed in all the varieties imaginable, some with jack-boots on, others with frock-coats, epaulettes, &c., and some even with monkeys on their shoulders. . . . I was afterwards told by several of our men that the Duke of Wellington, who saw us on our march, inquired of his staff, "who the devil are those fellows?"'. Costello himself wore a pair of trousers captured from a French dragoon, while Kincaid had two pairs of trousers, one made of common brown Portuguese cloth, and one of black velvet which he wore on Sundays!

For these reasons, it is extremely difficult to say with absolute accuracy exactly what was worn by a regiment at a particular time, beyond the general pattern of uniform. Some of the uniforms illustrated in the following plates may not agree with other recognised authorities, but all have been checked against their sources.



1 France: 4th Hussars. Troopers, 1796 and 1790





2 Russia : Chevaliers Garde. Officer (left) and N.C.O. (right), 1796



3 Switzerland : Light Cavalry. Trooper (left) and Officer (right), c. 1800





4 Poland: Artillery. Gunners, 1799 and 1808



5 Saxony: Kurfürst Cuirassier Regiment. Trooper (left) and Officer (right), 1803





6 Britain: The King's German Legion. Hussar Officer (*left*) and Infantry Private (*right*), c. 1813



7 France: Hussars. Troopers, c. 1807





8/9 France: Marshals. (Left to right) Undress Foot, Undress Moulded, Full dress Foot, with greatcoat, Marshal Bessières, c. 1805





10 Switzerland: Volunteer Jägers of Zurich. Riflemen, c. 1805



11 France: Cuirassiers. Troopers, 1812





12 Baden: Hussars. Officers, 1812



13 Nassau: Jägers. Officers, c. 1807





14 France: 33rd Regiment of Infantry. Privates (*left and centre*) and N.C.O. (*right*), 1807



15 Holland: Private, 3rd Light Infantry (*left*) and Officer 2nd Line Infantry (*right*), c. 1807





16 France: Mameluke. Trooper, 1806



17 Spain: Villaviciosa Dragoons. Trooper, c. 1806



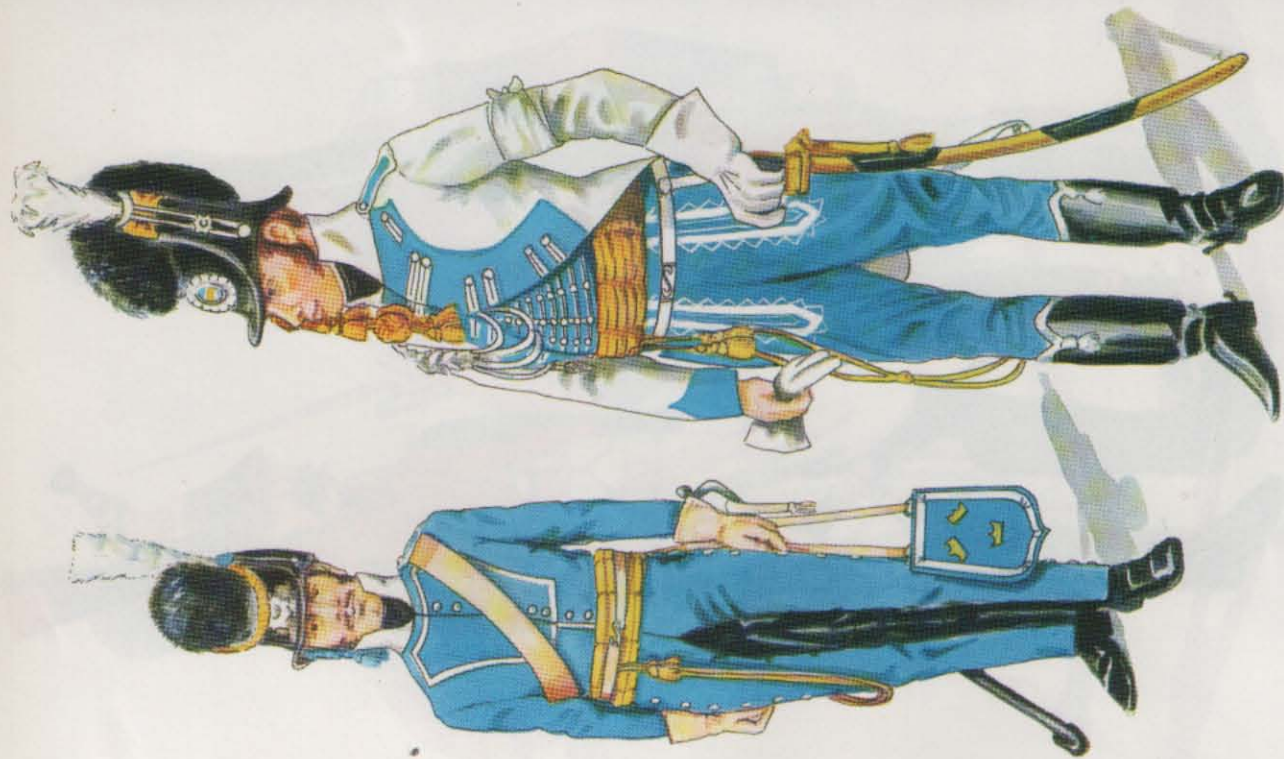


18 Saxony: Guard Grenadiers, Privates, c. 1806



19 France: Dragoons, Officer 17th Regiment (*left*) and Officer 4th Regiment (*right*), c. 1812



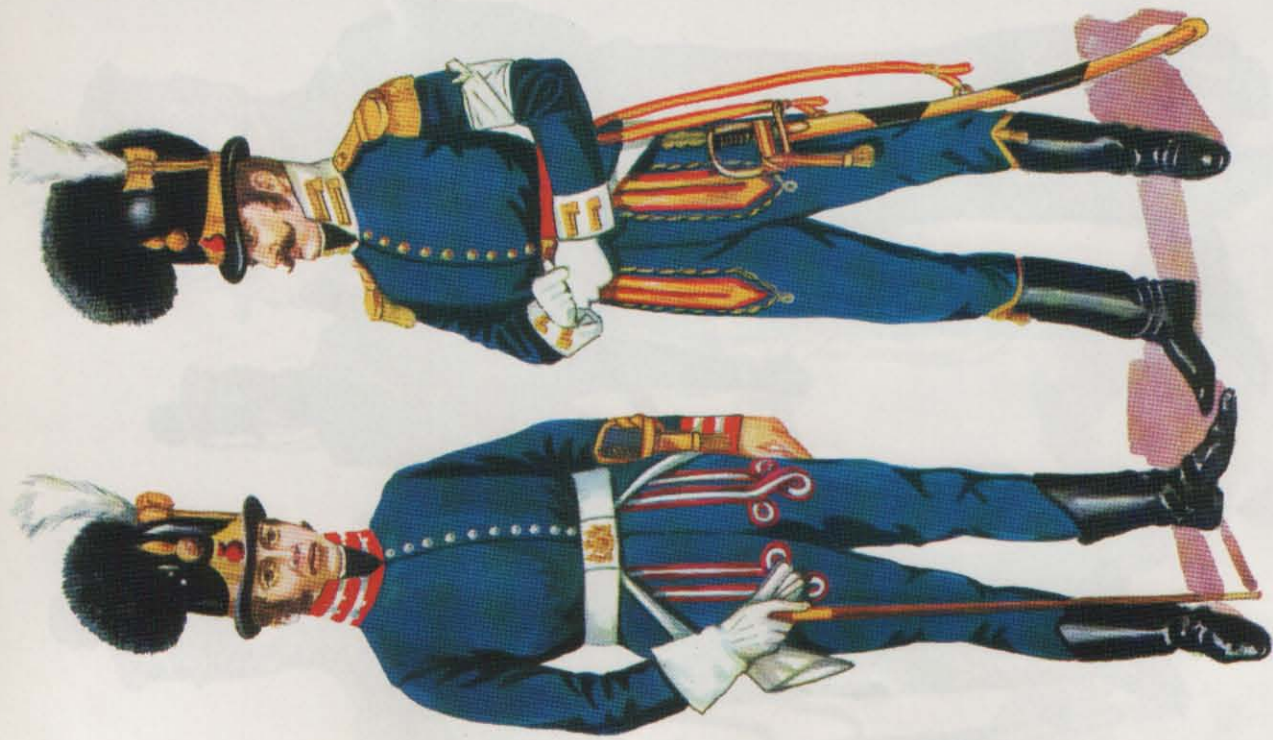


20 Sweden: Royal Life Guards. Trooper (left) and Officer (right), 1807



21 Denmark: King's Life Rifle Corps. Rifleman (left and centre) and Officer (right), 1807





22 Sweden: Life Grenadier Regiment and Grenadier Corps.  
Officers, c. 1813



23 Italy: Guard of Honour, Troopers, Bologna (left), Rome (centre) and  
Milan (right), c. 1808





24/25 Italy: Guard of Honour. (Left to right) Officer in full dress, mounted trooper in stable dress, trooper in stable dress, officer in undress cape coat, officers in full dress undress, c. 1808





26 Spain: Guerrillas, c. 1809



27 France: Chasseurs à Cheval of the Guard. Trooper, 1808





28 Württemberg: Garde Jäger Squadron. Officer, c. 1808



29 Prussia: 2nd Life Hussars. Trooper (left) and Officer (right), c. 1809





30 Portugal: Caçadores. Corporal 4th Battalion (*left*) and Private 5th Battalion (*right*), 1808

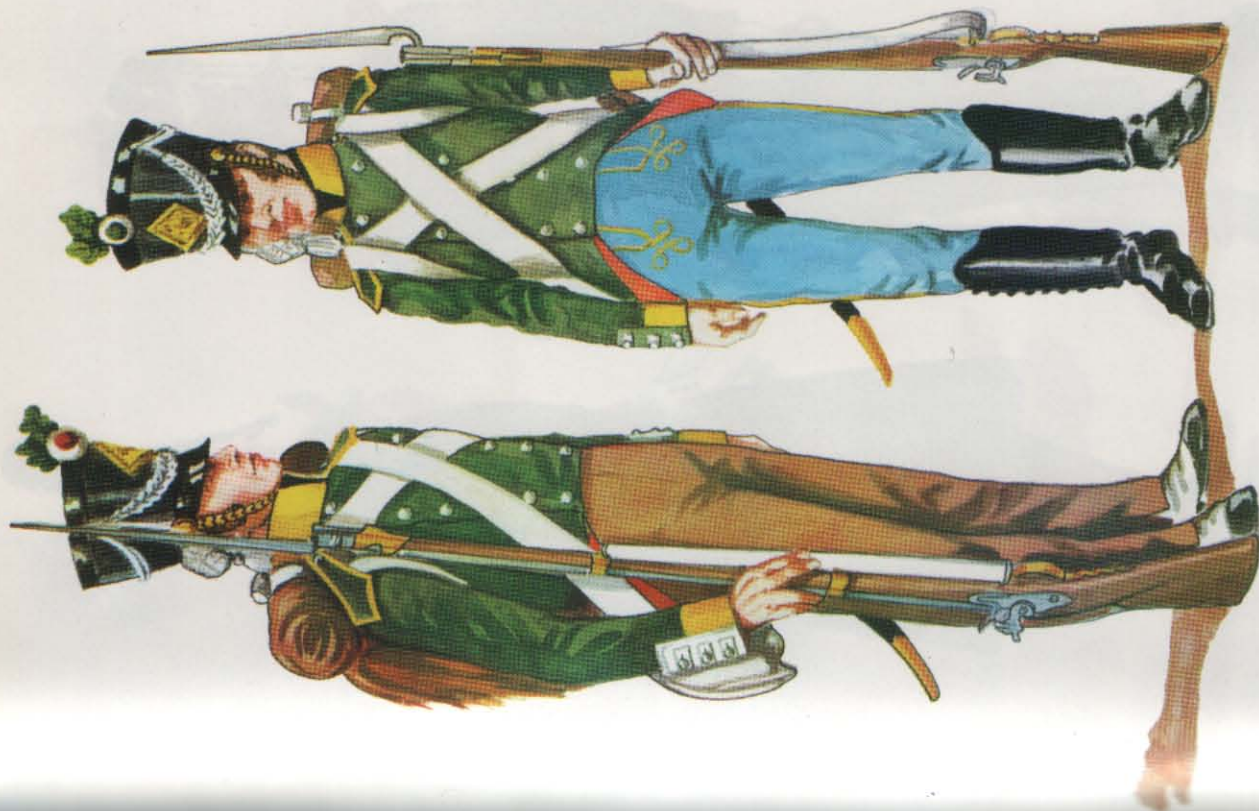


31 Prussia: General Staff. Parade dress (*left*), King's Adjutant-General (*centre*) and Cavalry Service dress (*right*), 1808-12





32 Austria: Hungarian Grenadiers. Officer (left), Private (centre) and Officer (right) 1814



33 Saxe-Coburg-Saalfeld Infantry. Service dress (left) and Review Order (right), 1809



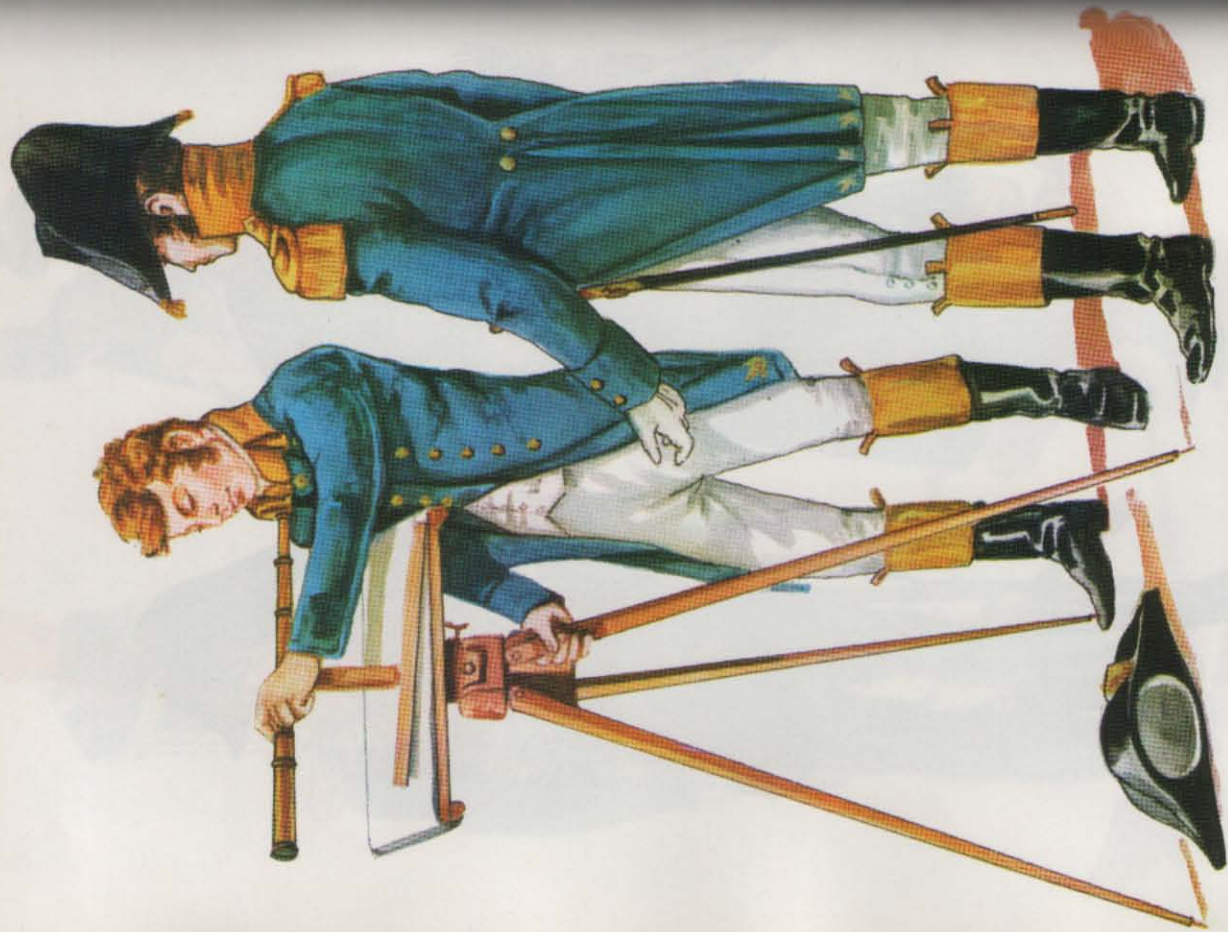


34 Russia : Jäger Regiments. Officers, 1809



35 France: Portuguese Legion. Cavalry Officer (left) and Infantry Officer (right), c. 1809





36 France: Geographical Engineers. Officers, c. 1809



37 Bavaria: Sharpshooter (*left*) Preysing Regiment, and Grenadier (*right*), Leib Regiment, 1809





38 Prussia: Garde Jäger Battalion. Jäger (left) and Officer (right), 1809



39 Austria: Grenadiers. Officer (left) and Private (right), 1809





40/41 Britain: (Left to right) Officer, Private, mounted General Officer and Officer, 1809





42 The Brunswick Corps. Jager (*left*) and  
Infantry Private (*right*), 1809



43 France: Chasseurs à Cheval of the Line. Troopers, Elite Company  
1st Regiment, 1810



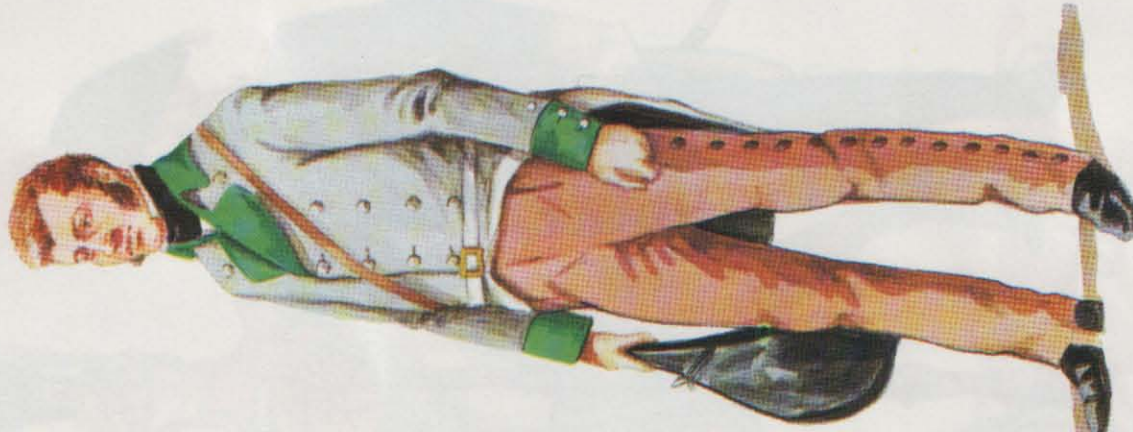
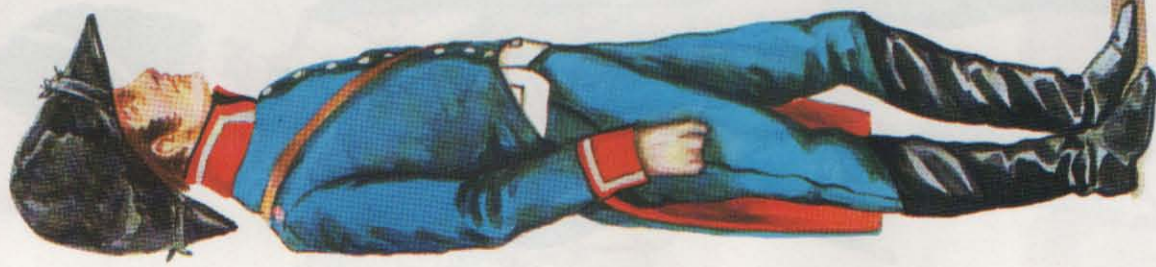


44 Westphalia: Garde du Corps. Officer, 1810



45 Switzerland: Légion Sainte-Galloise. Privates, 1810





46 Bavaria and Saxony: Surgeons. Bavarian (*left*) and Saxon (*right*), 1810



47 France: Engineers of the Imperial Guard. Privates (*left and centre*) and Officer (*right*), 1810



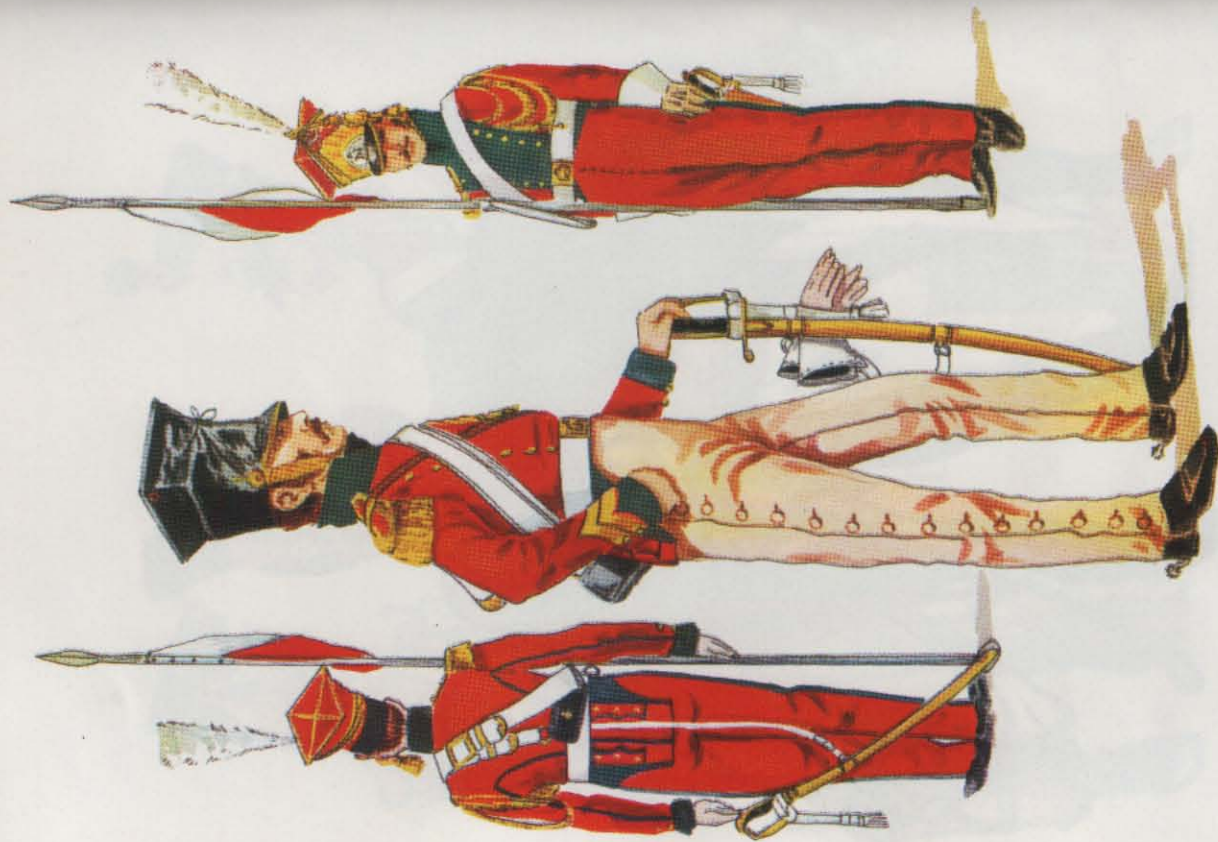


48 France: Infantry of the Vistula Legion, c. 1810



49 Hesse-Darmstadt: Cheveau-Légers, Trooper, 1810





50 France: 2nd Chevau-Légers-Lanciers of the Imperial Guard. Trooper (left), Officer in Campaign dress (centre) and Trooper (right), 1810



51 Britain: 2nd Greek Light Infantry. Privates, 1813





52 Saxony: Jägercorps 1813 and Light Infantry 1810



53 France: 1st (Polish) Cheveau-Légers-Lanciers of the Imperial Guard. Trooper mounted (*left*) and Officer (*right*), 1811





54 Spain: 7th Regiment Lancers of La Mancha. Trooper, c. 1811



55 France: Valaison Battalion. c. 1810





56/57 France: Neuchâtel Battalion. (Left to right) Gunner, Driver, Engineer Private and Officer, c. 1812





58 France: 30th Chasseurs à Cheval. Officers, 1811



59 Poland: General Officers. Parade dress (left) and Undress (right),  
c. 1796





60 Saxony: Cheval-Légers. Polentz Regiment Officer (*left*) and Prince Clement Regiment Officer (*right*), 1812



61 Britain: 10th Royal Hussars. Trooper, 1812





62 France: Corsican Regiment . Officer (*left*), Carabinier (*centre*) and Voltigeur (*right*). c. 1812



63 France: Lithuanian Tartars. Trooper, c. 1812





64 France: Grenadiers of the Imperial Guard. c. 1812



65 Duchy of Warsaw: The Krakus. Officers, c. 1812





66 France: The Isebourg Regiment. Carabiniers (*left and centre*) and Voltigeur Officer (*right*), c. 1811



67 Cleve-Berg: Infantry. Officer (*left*) and Grenadiers (*centre and right*), c. 1812





68 Bavaria: Foot Artillery, Officer (*left*) and Private (*right*), c. 1812



69 Prussia: 10th (Colberg) Regiment, Grenadier (*left*) and Musketeer (*right*), 1812





70 Britain: 42nd Royal Highland Regiment. Officer (*left*) and Private (*right*), c. 1812



71 France: Aides de Camp. Officers, c. 1812





72/73 Russia: Cuirassiers. (Left to right) N.C.O. Czarina's Regiment, mounted Officer Pskoff Regiment, Officer Military Order Regiment, mounted Trooper Pskoff Regiment, Officer Klein Russland Regiment, 1812





74 Russia: Infantry. Musketeer (*left*) and Grenadier (*right*), 1812

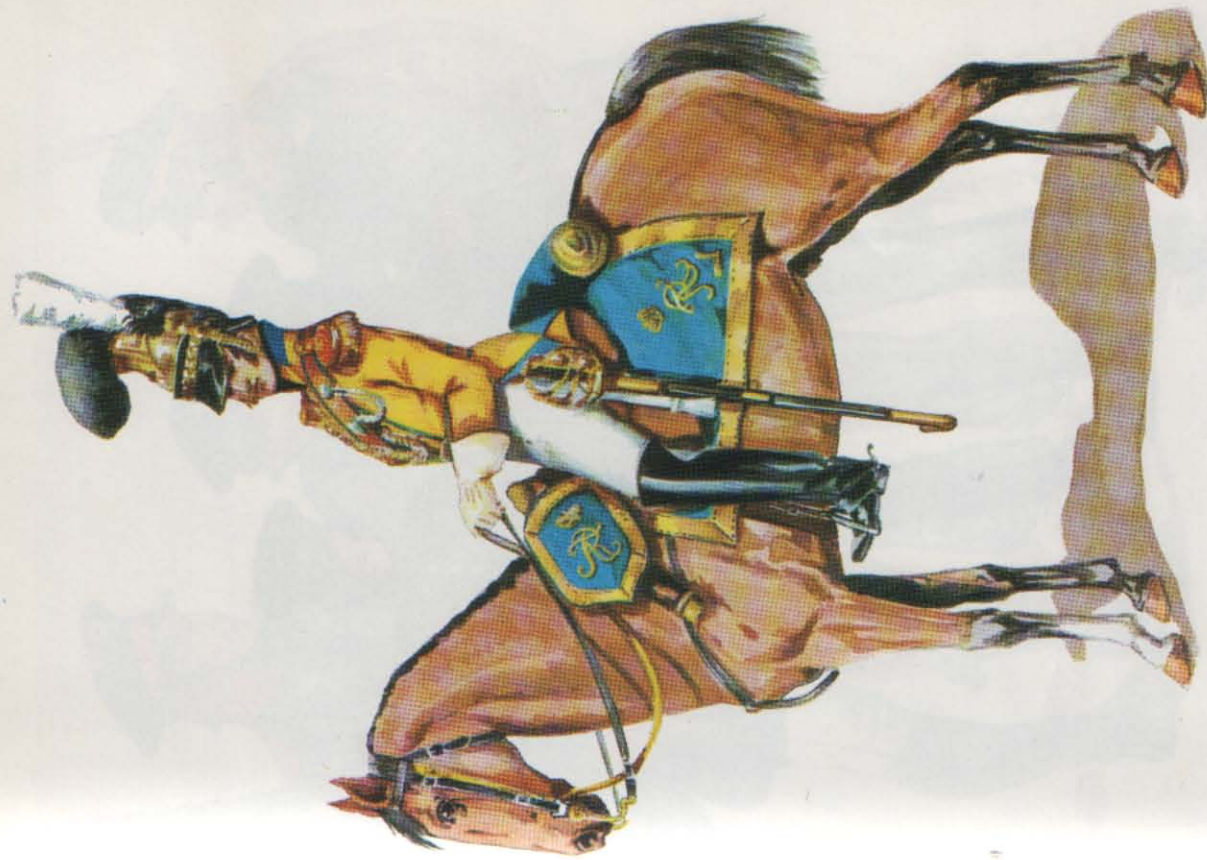


75 Württemberg: Artillery. Officer (*left*), Private (*centre*) and Officer, c. 1812





76 France: 4th Swiss Infantry. Officers, 1812



77 Saxony: Garde du Corps. Officer, c. 1812





78 Hanover: Feldjägercorps von Kiemannsege. Sharpshooter (left) and Rifleman (right) c. 1814



79 Prussia: Landwehr Infantry. c. 1814



# 1. France: 4th Hussars. Troopers, 1796 and 1790

The corps of Hussars raised in 1783 as the 'Colonel-Général' Regiment became the 4th Hussars of the French Republic following the Revolution. The uniform changed very little from then until 1815, except that the style followed the trends of military fashion.

The uniform was typical of the hussar style: the braided dolman or jacket; the fur-lined pelisse, which could be worn either hanging from the shoulder, as illustrated, or as a coat; the tight breeches and 'Hessian' boots (frequently replaced on active service by overalls), the 'barrelled' sash (crimson with yellow 'barrels' or bars of braid for the 4th), and the sabretache suspended from the sword-belt. The headress shown in this plate, the 'mirliton' cap, was a cylindrical, peakless shako, which had a long tail or streamer of coloured cloth worn round the body of the cap and allowed to hang loose down the wearer's back.

Two uniforms are shown; the right-hand figure is in the uniform of 1790, when the regiment was still wearing the dress of the latter days of the Ancien Régime; the sabretache bears the cipher of King Louis XVI. This design was changed under the Republican government to one of the dictator's fasces within a wreath of laurel. The left-hand figure shows the uniform of 1796; by this time the plume on the mirliton had become red

over black. Both figures are troopers; officers wore basically the same uniform, but with gold lace instead of yellow.

After distinguished service in the Napoleonic Wars, the regiment was amalgamated with the 13th and 14th Hussars to form the new 4th Hussars, the 'Hussards de Monsieur'.

# 2. Russia: Chevaliers Garde. Officer and N.C.O., 1796

Raised by Peter the Great as a sixty-man royal bodyguard, the Chevaliers Garde was the most distinguished unit in the Russian service. It served as a palace guard until 1800, when its strength was increased from a squadron to a regiment, and became the senior corps of cuirassiers in the Russian army. The uniforms depicted are conspicuously Prussian in pattern.

The bicorne hat was made of black felt, with silver tassels at the corners; the plumes were white over orange for officers, and orange over white for other ranks. The hat bore the black and orange cockade of Imperial Russia. The coatee, of the traditional white, had a 'stand-and-fall' collar in the red facing colour, and was edged with silver lace. The breast of the coatee was ornamented by a band of silver lace, with a red edging on either side.

The officer is shown wearing a 'supreveste', a sleeveless coat cut to resemble a cuirass. This was of black



80 Russia: Light Infantry. Carabinier (left) Jäger Private (centre) and Carabinier (right), c. 1814



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Blandford



## MILITARY UNIFORMS AND WEAPONS OF THE NAPOLEONIC WARS

At the beginning of the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars, the armies of Europe were costumed in a manner which had changed little since the wars of the eighteenth century. Basically, the armies of various states were uniformed in a similar pattern, only the colours distinguishing the nationality. The basic style consisted of a felt cocked hat, a long-skirted coat worn open to expose the waistcoat, breeches and gaiters or riding-boots in the case of cavalry. Varying 'arms of service' wore similar distinguishing features in all armies: the mitre-shaped fur cap of the Grenadiers, the more functional uniform of the light infantry, the fur caps and pelisses of the Hussars (a term originally used to describe Hungarian light cavalry), and the white uniform of the heavy cavalry of numerous German states. Armies were distinguished by basic uniform colours – white for France, Spain and Austria, red for Britain, blue for Prussia and green for Russia. Within individual armies, regiments were distinguished by different coloured 'facings', this term being applied to the collar, cuffs, lapels and sometimes the 'turnbacks' of the coat-tails.

The French Revolution began the transformation of military costume which continued to change the appearance of European armies with amazing rapidity until the late nineteenth century. The huge masses of conscripts required by the armies of Revolutionary France adopted the blue uniform of the National Guard, and the old white uniform of the French regulars was abandoned forever (except for an unsuccessful experiment in 1806–7). These changes in uniform began the rapid evolution which affected the armies of every participant in the wars of the next twenty years.

The first general changes became evident at the turn of the century. The old style of coat-tail became shorter, and in many cases the double-breasted coat gave way to a single-breasted version, closed to the waist. The cocked hat was replaced for all except officers in the majority of most armies by a 'shako', a cylindrical felt or leather headdress, usually with a peak, in a bewildering variety of styles, ornamented with metal badges, cockades, plumes and cords in abundance. The word 'shako' is derived from the Hungarian term for a peaked hat. By 1810 the shako was the most common headdress for the armies of Europe, though the traditional fur Grenadier cap was still prized by those élite corps privileged to wear it

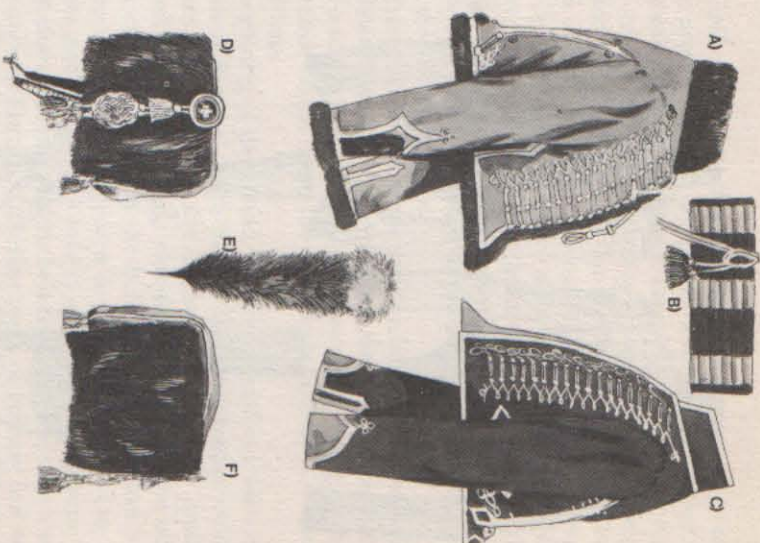


Figure 1. *Chasseurs à Cheval of the Imperial Guard*

- A. Pelisse. Scarlet cloth with black fur trim. Orange lace and braiding for the rank and file, mixed green and gold lace and braiding for N.C.O.s. Officers had gold lace, and white fur trim.
- B. 'Barrelled' sash. Green cloth, with cords, 'barrels' and tassels of distinctive colours: gold for officers, mixed scarlet and gold for N.C.O.s, and red for other ranks.
- C. Dolman. Dark green with red cuffs. Gold lace for officers, mixed scarlet and gold for N.C.O.s, and orange for other ranks.
- D. Colpack. See description of Figure E, Plate 4 (side view).
- E. Plume. See description of Figure E, Plate 4.
- F. Colpack. See description of Figure E, Plate 4 (front view).



(a variant is still worn by Britain's Brigade of Guards). Leather helmets with fur or woollen crests were favoured by several German states, notably Bavaria.

Cavalry uniforms were influenced by the large variety of corps raised in the French army: Hussars, Dragoons, Cuirassiers, Chasseurs à Cheval, Horse Grenadiers, Carabiniers and Lancers, each with a distinctive uniform and colouring, the Hussars as always retaining their resplendent colouring and in some cases their fur caps, which were also adopted by the Chasseurs à Cheval. The emergence of light infantry as an important force on the battlefield resulted in a new style of uniform, more functional and, of necessity, more sombre than before, to act as an early version of camouflage, though in the French army in particular this aspect was somewhat negated by the plumes and epaulettes in the yellow, red and green colours of the 'Voltigeur' arm.

The military fashion of Europe was to a large extent influenced by that of France. Those countries under French domination or alliance adopted costume of a totally French style, sometimes combining 'native' items with those of French origin. Even the opponents of France felt the influence of French fashions.

At the beginning of the period, the French uniform was in the cut of that of the 'Ancien Régime', with blue as the predominant colour. Although the legwear remained basically unchanged, the coat gradually became shorter, and in 1812 a jacket, closed to the waist, was adopted by the infantry, a direct influence of the Polish styles which had prevailed since the introduction of Polish troops in the late 1790s. The shako, which replaced the cocked hat in 1806-7, changed slightly over the years but retained its characteristic, slightly bell-topped form, which was extensively copied throughout Europe. Different types of infantry had varying distinctions - for example, the red plumes and epaulettes of the Grenadiers.

The neo-classical style of art popular in France resulted in the metal helmet worn by dragoons, cuirassiers, carabiniers and some of the Cheval-Légers-Lanciers, though the helmet had its origin in a peakless version worn before the Revolution. The cuirass, a return to the armour of the medieval period, had been adopted by several regiments of cavalry in Europe in the eighteenth century, but it was the formation of the cuirassier arm of the French army which brought about the general revival of armoured horsemen, the great 'shock weapon' of the Napoleonic Wars. The braided dolman and pelisse of the Hussar corps remained largely unchanged, but became progressively more splendid. Ironically, the most vital arm of service, the artillery, wore the plainest and least elaborate

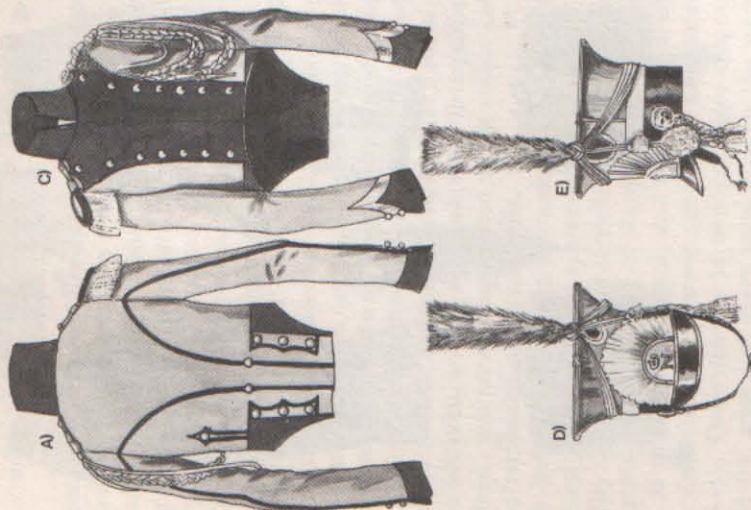


Figure 2. 2nd Cheval-Légers-Lanciers of the Imperial Guard ('The Red Lancers')

A & C. Trooper's Kurtka. Scarlet with dark blue facings and piping. Brass buttons. Yellow epaulette and aiguillette, the epaulette having a blue 'crescent'.  
D & E. Trooper's czapka. Red cloth top, with black leather peak and turban. Yellow centre band and piping, yellow cords and tassels. Brass plate, peak-  
edging and brass chinscales on a red cloth backing. 'Tricolor' cockade and white plume. Officers wore a similar shako, but with gold lace, cords and piping; senior N.C.O.s had cords of mixed scarlet and gold.



uniforms of the army; this was a custom prevalent throughout Europe. Polish influence originated with the introduction of Polish exiles into the French service, and the square-topped 'czapka' headdress, the plastron-fronted 'kurta' jacket, and the loose trousers soon became the accepted dress of cavalry regiments armed with the traditional Polish weapon, the lance, not only in France but throughout Europe, and Polish styles were gradually adopted by other arms.

British uniform developed independently until 1800, when the short-tailed infantry jacket and 'stove-pipe' shako were introduced. In 1812 the shako altered to the false-fronted 'Belgic' pattern, perhaps inspired by the earlier Portuguese 'Barretina' style. French influence was more keenly felt in the cavalry in 1812, when brass and leather helmets reminiscent of the French dragon style were introduced into the heavy cavalry, while the light dragons abandoned their uniquely British 'Tarleton' helmet and braided dolman for a bell-topped shako and Polish-style jacket. The Hussar costume became progressively more French in style, particularly when shakos were adopted. British influence was evident in Portugal, whose army was reorganised and to some extent officered by the British, and in Spain, whose uniforms had been the most outdated of any European state.

The Prussian army uniforms followed a natural progression from those of the famous days of Frederick the Great, but the collapse after Jena necessitated a complete reorganisation, and consequently a new style of uniform was evolved, consisting of a closed jacket and slightly bell-topped shako which became standard for the reconstructed Prussian army, though elements of the old uniform were retained.

Austrian uniforms, on the whole, changed little. The traditional white uniform was retained, together with a distinctively-shaped shako, though a leather-crested helmet was worn for a short time. Grenadiers retained their fur caps with large brass plates, and the Hungarian regiments their famous sky-blue breeches. In common with the other states, the Austrian hussars presented an impressive myriad of colours. Lancers were naturally costumed in the Polish style.

The early years of the nineteenth century were spent by Czar Alexander I in 'de-Prussiansing' the Russian army, which involved a general reorganisation and a change in uniform which culminated in the distinctive scutle-shaped 'kiwer' shako, probably designed by Alexander himself, though the traditional Russian green colour was retained. The Russian cuirassiers retained the white uniform common to much of the heavy cavalry of central Europe in the previous century, but added a tall leather helmet. A similar style was worn by the dragons, whose basic colour was

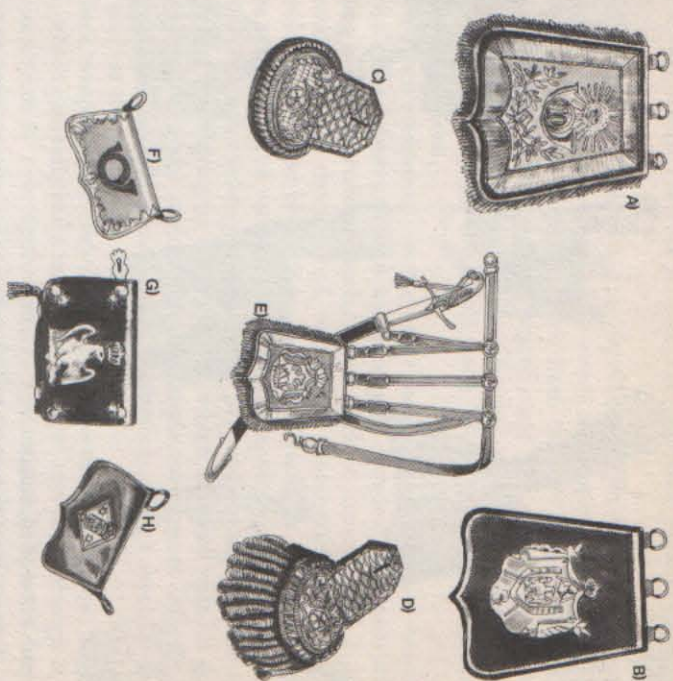


Figure 3. French accoutrements

- A. Officer's sabretache, 10th Chasseurs à Cheval, Consulate period. Red cloth ground with gold lace and embroidery, and gold fringes.
- B. Officer's sabretache, service dress, Chasseurs à Cheval of the Imperial Guard. Black leather, bearing the Imperial arms in gilt metal.
- C & D. Epaulettes of the 'chef de bataillon' (Major), Grenadiers of the Imperial Guard. Gold lace and embroidery.
- E. Officer's full dress sabretache, sabre and belt, Chasseurs à Cheval of the Imperial Guard. Sabretache with green cloth ground with gold lace edging and fringe, bearing the Imperial Arms in natural colours (gold eagle and crown, on ermine backing with crimson lining and gold lace edging, medium blue flags with orange tips, on flagpoles which are coloured [leading from the centre out], medium blue, crimson and medium green), Red leather belt and slings with gold lace and gilt fittings. Sabre with gilt fittings and black leather scabbard, also fitted gilt. Gold sword-knot.
- F. Officer's pouch, Chasseurs à Cheval. Leather, with silvered flap bearing a hunting horn badge in gold, with gold lace edging.
- G. Pouch, Grenadiers of the Imperial Guard. Black leather, with brass badges. Fastened underneath is the fatigue cap ('bonnet de police'), which was dark blue with orange piping and tassel.
- H. Pouch, Grenadiers à Cheval of the Imperial Guard. Black leather with brass badge. Also worn by the Dragons of the Imperial Guard.





Figure 4. French headdress

- A. Undress cap ('bonnet de police'), officer, Chasseurs à Cheval of the Imperial Guard. Green cloth, with gold lace, tassel and badge, with red piping.
- B. Officer's hat, Chasseurs à Cheval of the Imperial Guard. Black felt, with gold lace loop, gilt button, 'tricolor' cockade, and green plume with red tip.
- C. Fusilier officer's shako, 81st Line Regiment, 1812 pattern. Black felt with leather reinforcements. Gilt plate and chin scales. 'Tricolor' cockade of white, red and blue (reading from the outside). White pom-pom with coloured surround and tuft: 1st company, green; 2nd company, sky blue; 3rd company, orange; 4th company, violet. Company number was borne in the centre of the cockade.
- E. Colpack, Chasseurs à Cheval of the Imperial Guard. Black-brown fur with red 'bag'. Piping and tassel of bag and hanging cords or 'raquettes' of gold for officers, mixed green and gold for N.C.O.s, and orange for other ranks. Gilt chin scales for officers, brass for other ranks. 'Tricolor' cockade bearing small Imperial eagle badge. Green plume with a red tip for all except senior officers, who had white plumes.
- F. Ornament worn on the rear of the bearskin caps of the Grenadiers of the Imperial Guard, 1808-15. Red cloth patch bearing gold grenade for officers and N.C.O.s, white grenade for other ranks. Prior to 1808, the red patch bore a white cross; from 1801-2 the cross was orange.
- G. Shako plate, 81st Line Regiment, 1812 pattern. Gilt for officers, brass for other ranks.

green, and the Hussar costume relieved the otherwise sombre appearance of the Russian army.

The remaining combatants in the Napoleonic Wars based their designs on those of the larger powers. The states not under French influence adopted a combination of styles copied from those of Russia, Prussia and sometimes France, incorporating items of their own design, for example the Swedish 'kusket' helmet. Styles changed and interchanged, were copied and modified, until the result was a 'glittering panoply' of almost incredible dimensions.

Weapons and equipment, on the other hand, changed little throughout the period. The infantry private was equipped with leather 'cross-belts', supporting a black cartridge-pouch, a haversack, a bayonet, and in most continental armies, a short sword, which was a near-useless relic of the eighteenth century. On his back he carried a 'pack' or knapsack, which might be constructed of varnished leather, canvas or animal skin, in which he carried his spare clothing, food and few personal belongings. The total weight might be anything up to 60 pounds, which, coupled with his tight-fitting and unfunctional uniform, made simple movements difficult, let alone fighting. The cavalry had similar equipment, though much of theirs was carried on the saddle.

The basic weapon of the Napoleonic Wars was the smoothbore, flintlock musket, which generally had a maximum range of 250 yards, though it was wildly inaccurate at 100; approximately 250 musket balls were fired in battle for every man killed. The ball or bullet was a spherical piece of lead, which caused appalling wounds. Tactics were controlled by the weapons available, and the army of the Napoleonic period fought in compact blocks of troops, in which the individual was virtually transformed into an

- H. Cors or 'raquettes' for colpack of Chasseurs à Cheval of the Imperial Guard.
- I. Bearskin cap, Grenadiers of the Imperial Guard. Black bearskin, with a gilt plate for officers and copper for other ranks. The cords and tassels were gold for officers, mixed gold and scarlet for sergeants and senior N.C.O.s, and white for Grenadiers. Scarlet plumes worn by all ranks, except senior officers, who wore white. At the rear was borne the cloth patch shown in figure 'F'.
- J. Cap plate, Grenadiers of the Imperial Guard, 1804-15. Gilt for officers, copper for other ranks.



automaton which loaded, aimed and fired until ordered to stop or until stopped by an enemy bullet. Disciplined troops could fire at a rate of two and a half to three shots per minute, though after a dozen shots the musket-barrel became progressively more fouled with burnt gunpowder, reducing the rate of fire to one shot or even less per minute. The bayonet, in effect a knife fixed on the end of the musket, was used for hand-to-hand combat; contrary to popular belief, a bayonet charge rarely took place on troops which were not already shattered by musketry, and the 'charge' was often conducted at a walk. The only defence against cavalry was to form a square, presenting a near-impenetrable rectangle of bayonets to the enemy.

Light infantry was used for 'skirmishing', that is, extending in open order to harass the enemy, to precede an attack or absorb the first shock of the enemy advance. Certain corps were armed with rifled muskets, which were more accurate than the smoothbore; the success of this system is best shown by the British Light Division in the Peninsular War, undoubtedly a major factor in the French defeat.

The 'shock troops' of the Napoleonic army were the heavy cavalry, big men on big horses, frequently armoured, whose duty was to smash enemy formations and ride down broken regiments. Their swords were generally long and straight, made for thrusting. The lighter cavalry was used as a support for the heavy, and was also employed on reconnaissance and skirmishing. Cavalry charges were executed over short distances; only in the last fifty yards were the horses given their heads. Over difficult terrain, the 'charge' might be little more than a walk. Lances were particularly successful not only against cavalry, but a lancer could jab at a square with deadly effect, while keeping out of bayonet range. Cavalry firearms, carbines and pistols, were largely useless due to their short range.

The most powerful weapon on the field of battle was the artillery; cannon which fired 'roundshot' and howitzers which fired shells. The cast-iron cannon-ball was the principal weapon, travelling up to a mile, and capable of destroying a score of men. When bouncing and even rolling along the ground, a roundshot could carry away a limb. They came in numerous sizes, from the small four-pound ball to the giant twenty-eight-pounder. The cannon were named after the weight of ball they fired. Below 400 yards, cannon could be turned into huge shotguns by firing 'canister' or 'case-shot', a metal cylinder which ruptured at the muzzle of the gun, spreading its load of musket-balls over a wide arc. Howitzers fired spherical shells which exploded amid the enemy, fragmenting into shrapnel (only the British had shrapnel proper, their shells bursting over the heads of the enemy). Rockets were used by the British at Leipzig and Waterloo,

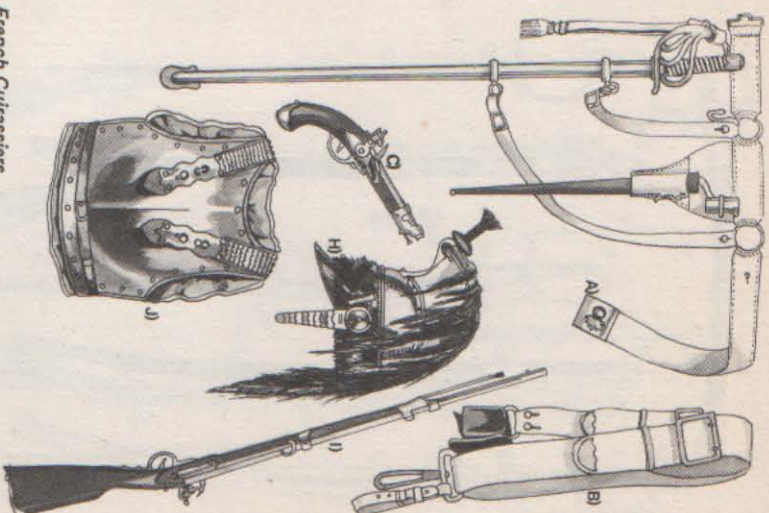


Figure 5. French Cuirassiers

- A. Sabre, bayonet and belt. White leather belt with brass plate and fittings. Sabre (model An XI) with brass hilt and steel scabbard. White sword-knot for the rank and file, mixed red and white for N.C.O.s, and gold lace for officers. Brown leather bayonet-scabbard, which was not carried by officers and senior N.C.O.s.
- B. Shoulder-belts. White leather with brass fittings, one supporting the black leather pouch, and one supporting the carbine. Carbine-belts not worn by officers or senior N.C.O.s.
- C. Pistol, model An IX. Steel barrel and lock, brass fittings.
- H. Helmet, 1811 pattern. Steel with crest, chin scales and plume socket of brass. Black fur band, black horsehair 'tail' and tuft (aigrette).
- I. Carbine, model An IX. Brass fittings. The loop for attachment to the carbine belt can be seen.
- J. Cuirass. Steel with brass rivets. Lined with red cloth with white edging. Tied at the waist by black leather belt. Brass scales with red cloth over the shoulders. Officers wore similar cuirasses, but with silver edging to the lining, red waist-belts edged silver, and gilt shoulder-scales.



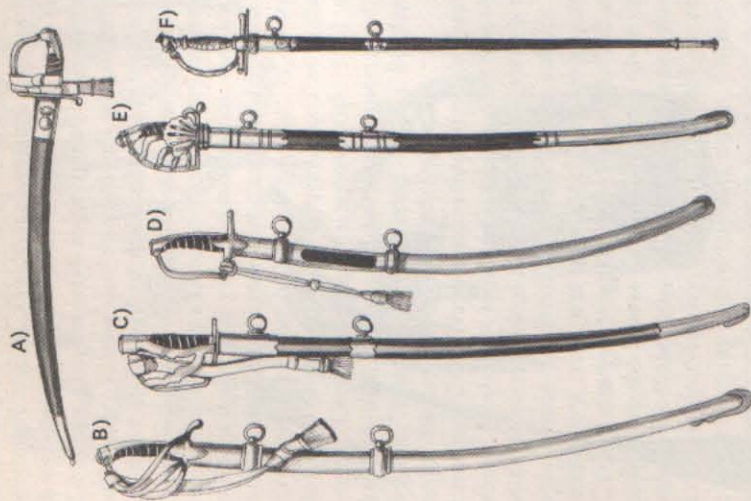


Figure 6. French Swords

- A. Sabre, Grenadiers of the Consular Guard. Short sword carried by the rank and file only. Brass hilt, black leather scabbard with brass fittings. White sword-knot with red tassel for all except senior N.C.O.s, who had knots of mixed scarlet and gold. Black leather grip bound with wire.
- B. Light cavalry sabre, c. 1812. Brass hilt, steel scabbard. Black leather grip bound with wire.
- C. Chasseur à Cheval sabre, c. 1801. Brass hilt, black leather scabbard with brass fittings. Black leather hilt bound with wire.
- D. Chasseur à Cheval of the Imperial Guard, c. 1812. Brass hilt, black leather grip bound with wire. Brass scabbard with black leather inserts. Gold sword-knot for officers, white leather for other ranks.
- E. Officer's sabre, Dragoons, c. 1812. Brass hilt, black leather grip bound with wire. Black leather scabbard with brass fittings.
- F. General Officer's sword, c. 1812. Gilt hilt, Black leather scabbard with gilt fittings.

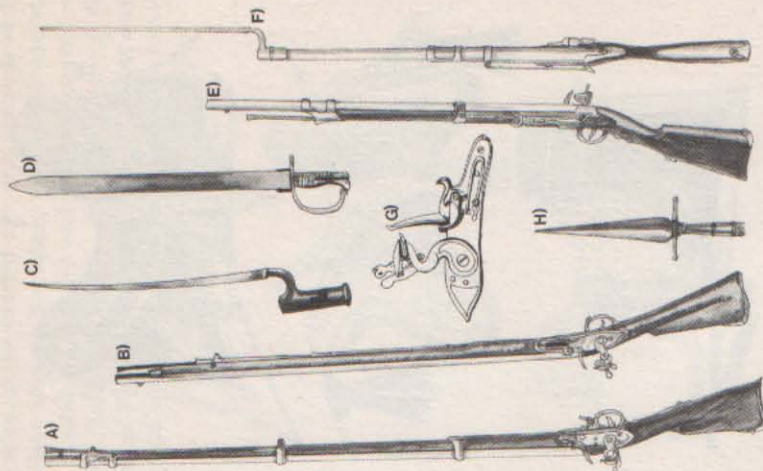


Figure 7. Weapons

- A. French musket, Infantry of the Imperial Guard. Brass fittings.
- B. British Infantry musket, nicknamed 'Brown Bess'. Brass fittings.
- C. British socket bayonet for the 'Brown Bess' musket. Steel, carried in a black leather scabbard.
- D. British sword-bayonet for the Baker Rifle, 2nd pattern, 1801-c. 1815. Brass hilt; carried in a black leather scabbard with brass fittings.
- E. French Hussar carbine. Brass fittings.
- F. French carbine, Chasseurs à Cheval of the Imperial Guard, with fixed bayonet.
- G. The flintlock mechanism.
- H. British 'spontoon' head; a 'half-pike' carried by sergeants of infantry.



but were unreliable and only effective in weakening the morale of the enemy.

Compared to arms of the present age, the weapons of the Napoleonic period were in their infancy. But sabre, musket-ball and roundshot could inflict hideous wounds, and kill, maim and slaughter with appalling efficiency; in the Italian campaign of 1943-44, from the landings at Salerno to the fall of Rome, the Allied Fifth Army lost scarcely any more men than the French lost at Borodino in eleven hours, on a front of three and a half miles.

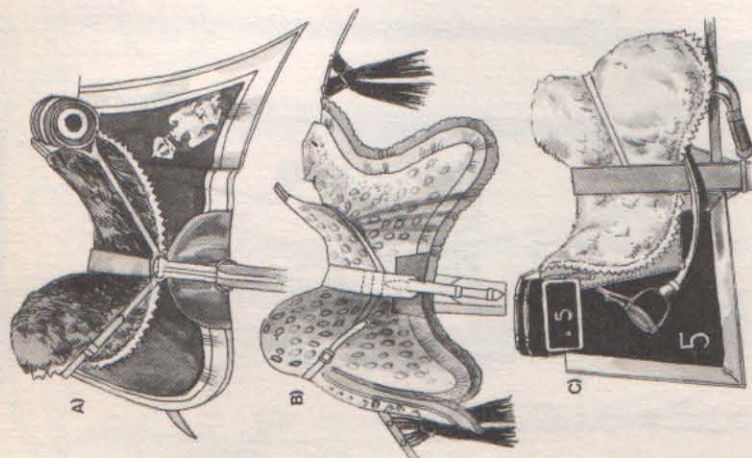


Figure 8. French shabraques

- A. 2nd Cheveau-Légers-Lancers of the Imperial Guard. Dark blue cloth with yellow lace and ornaments. Scarlet valise with yellow lace and piping. Black sheepskin saddle-cover edged with yellow. Black leather straps. Officers had similar shabraques, but with gold lace, a pantherskin saddle cover, and red leather straps.
- B. Chasseurs à Cheval of the Imperial Guard. Officer's shabraque of pantherskin, edged with a band on gold lace with red piping on either side of the lace, and a green cloth outer edge.
- C. 5th Cuirassiers. Blue shabraque and valise with white piping and numerals. White sheepskin saddle-cover trimmed with the regimental facing colour (light orange). Black leather straps.